Advancing basic skills and innovation through eTwinning for future teachers

European conference for initial teacher education 2025

Date: 27 – 29 November 2025

Venue: Quark Hotel Milano

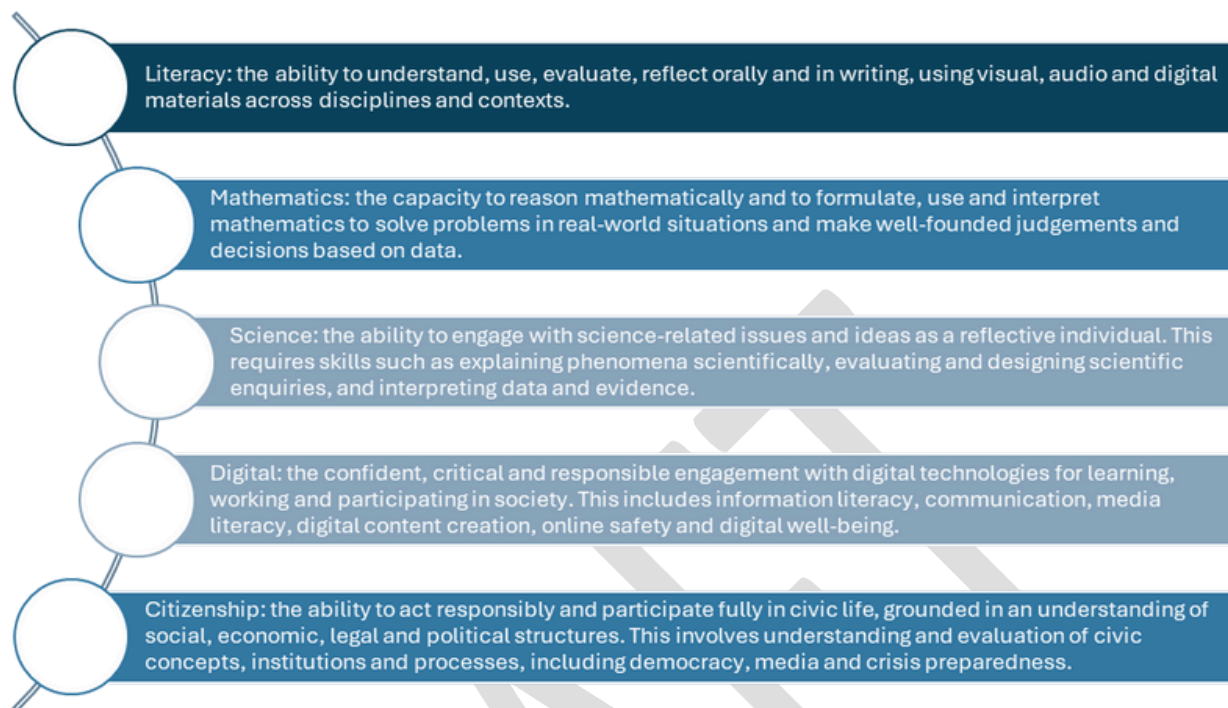Address: Via Lampedusa 11/a - Milano (MI), Italy

Introduction

"eTwinning for future teachers" brings together initial teacher education (ITE) institutions that include eTwinning in their teacher education activities. The aim is to introduce teacher educators and student teachers to eTwinning so that they can benefit from an international and professional community, with the opportunity to implement innovative pedagogical methodologies with their peers.

The current document outlines the proposal for the 2025 European conference for initial teacher education including the:

- background of the conference;
- goals of the conference;
- description of the target audience;
- draft agenda.

Background of the conference

Basic skills—literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship—are fundamental for active citizenship, social inclusion, and access to lifelong learning. Citizenship is now considered part of the basic skills set. This is a crucial novelty as we are increasingly operating in a context of rising political polarisation, eroded trust in institutions and increasing information manipulation.

Literacy: the ability to understand, use, evaluate, reflect orally and in writing, using visual, audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts.

Mathematics: the capacity to reason mathematically and to formulate, use and interpret mathematics to solve problems in real-world situations and make well-founded judgements and decisions based on data.

Science: the ability to engage with science-related issues and ideas as a reflective individual. This requires skills such as explaining phenomena scientifically, evaluating and designing scientific enquiries, and interpreting data and evidence.

Digital: the confident, critical and responsible engagement with digital technologies for learning, working and participating in society. This includes information literacy, communication, media literacy, digital content creation, online safety and digital well-being.

Citizenship: the ability to act responsibly and participate fully in civic life, grounded in an understanding of social, economic, legal and political structures. This involves understanding and evaluation of civic concepts, institutions and processes, including democracy, media and crisis preparedness.

Despite ongoing investment in education and training, data from international assessments continue to reveal significant skill gaps across EU Member States, particularly in basic skills. A critical concern is the declining proficiency in basic skills among school-age populations. Nearly 30% of European 15-year-olds fail to reach minimum proficiency in mathematics, while approximately one in four underperform in reading and science (OECD, 2022). Another enduring challenge is the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on learning outcomes. Evidence indicates that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more than six times as likely to underachieve in basic skills compared to their more advantaged peers (European Commission, 2024).This learning gap reinforces cycles of inequality and underscores the need for targeted, equity-focused interventions. Compounding these academic challenges are low levels of student motivation and engagement, which teachers across the EU identify as key barriers to skill development. A survey conducted through the European School Education Platform noted that diminished motivation, lack of parental involvement, and high rates of non-educational screen time interfere with effective learning (ESEP, 2024). In addition, teachers reported insufficient preparation in initial teacher education and limited access to continuous professional development, hindering their ability to implement effective strategies for teaching and assessing basic skills.

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[1]PISA (for literacy, maths, science), International Computer and Information Literacy Study ICILS (for digital); International Civic and Citizenship Education Study ICCS (for citizenship).

Against this background, the European Commission's Action Plan on Basic Skills, adopted in 2025 accompanying the Union of Skills, sets out a comprehensive strategy to tackle these gaps by highlighting the need to focus on the quality of instruction, systemic support for skill development, and the central role of teachers. The action plan emphasises that equipping teacher—especially those in initial teacher education (ITE)—with the tools and competences to teach and assess basic skills is a critical precondition for progress. The Action Plan on Basic Skills also introduces a range of systemic initiatives to strengthen the professional ecosystem around teacher development. Most importantly, it announces an EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda for 2026 to focus on improving educators' working conditions, training and career prospects. Furthermore, it announces a mentoring system for early career teachers in all subjects and promotes Erasmus+ Teacher Academies and a new community of practice on the European School Education Platform to disseminate evidence-based practices and facilitate transnational collaboration among teacher educators.

In this context, this conference seeks to provide a platform for dialogue, reflection, and exchange of concrete eTwinning practices on basic skills within initial teacher education. It aims to promote innovation in teacher education and foster systemic cooperation in support of the Basic Skills Action Plan. The conference brings together teacher educators to explore how initial teacher education can more effectively support the development of pupils' basic skills—with the support of eTwinning as a key enabler of collaborative online international learning and pedagogical innovation. eTwinning, through the European School Education Platform, offers a dynamic space for prospective and in-service teachers to engage with learning resources and initiate collaborative projects with other partners. Importantly, eTwinning fosters motivation and engagement—two factors identified as critical in reversing underachievement—by encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and digital collaboration among teacher educators, student teachers, schoolteachers and pupils. As such, eTwinning serves not only as a tool for European collaboration but also as a practical and scalable means for embedding the principles of the Basic Skills Action Plan into initial teacher education and everyday school practice.

Goals of the conference

- To examine the role of eTwinning for future teachers in promoting basic skills (literacy, numeracy, science, digital and citizenship skills) within the context of initial teacher education.

- To explore the implications of the basic skills action plan for initial teacher education across the EU.

- To identify innovative pedagogical approaches and curricular models that support the teaching of basic skills in ITE.

- To highlight good practices and collaborative projects between initial teacher education institutions and schools focusing on basic skills.

- To foster peer learning and networking among teacher educators committed to embedding basic skills development in teacher education programmes.

Targetaudience

The target audience of the conference include:

- new teacher educators

- teacher educators nominated for the European award and their student teachers

- teacher educators with a national ITE label and their student teachers

- any other interested teacher educators and their student teachers.

In addition:

- country quotas applyfor the conference

- the maximum numberof onsite attendees is 100 participants

- streaming of plenarysessions will be via YouTube, whereas for workshops via MS Teams.

Draft agenda

DAY 1 – 27 NOVEMBER
Streamed for online attendees – no registration is required

14:00 – 15:00	Registration Opening
15:00 – 15:30	Welcome by European Commission Greetings from Italian stakeholders (NSO, Ministry - TBD)
15:30 – 16:00	Keynote Dr. Amos van Gelderen, Professor, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (To be confirmed)
16:00 – 16:45	European ITE award ceremony The video of the award-winning initial teacher education institution will be displayed, and the representative teacher educator(s) of the institution will present their work, their lessons learned and future steps to provide inspiration and support.
16:45 – 17:15	Break Cultural activity (TBD with the Italian NSO) Dinner at the hotel
17:15 – 18:30	
19:30	

DAY 2 –28 NOVEMBER
Streamed for online registered attendees – one room per session

09:30 – 11:00	Workshop session 1: Four workshops* WS1: Integrating eTwinning into initial teacher education: models, formats and examples of eTwinning projects (induction for new teacher educators) WS2: TBD based on the proposals received WS3: TBD based on the proposals received WS4: TBD based on the proposals received
11:00 – 11:30	Break Workshop session 2: Four workshops*
11:30 – 13:00	

WS5: Integrating eTwinning into initial teacher education: models, formats and examples of eTwinning projects (induction for new teacher educators) WS6: TBD based on the proposals received WS7: TBD based on the ==proposals received WS8: TBD based== on the proposals received

Lunch ==at the hotel Consultation group for== the upcoming Teacher's and

13:00 – 14:30	trainers' agenda
14:30 – 15:30	Break Practice sharing session
15:30 – 16:00	This session will allow participants to present their experiences in relation to curriculum integration, project implementation and research in eTwinning. At 16:45, participants will have the opportunity to change rooms and attend another session.
16:00 – 17:30	PS1: Curriculum integration PS2: Project implementation PS3: Research Dinner
20:00	

DAY 3 – 29 NOVEMBER

Streamed for online attendees – no registration is required

09:30 – 10:00	Erasmus+ Teacher Academies presentation ==(To be confirmed)==
10:00 – 12:00	Co-creation session
	This session will allow participants to develop collaborative partnerships in eTwinning and engage in co-creation processes regarding curriculum integration, project implementation and research in eTwinning.
12:00 – 12:30	Closing of the conference
12:30	Lunch boxes